

## MINUTES

### Master Plan Steering Committee

#### TOWN OF PETERBOROUGH

Wednesday, September 10, 2014 – 5:45 p.m.

1 Grove Street, Peterborough, New Hampshire

**Members Present:** Mose Olenik, Teresa Cadorette, Sue Chollet, Beth Alpaugh-Cote, James Kelly, Ivy Vann, Alan Zeller and Tyler Ward

**Staff Present:** Peter Throop, Director and Laura Norton, Administrative Assistant, Office of Community Development.

Co-Chair Olenik (Ms. Olenik) called the meeting to order 5:45 p.m. She welcomed the members and UNH Cooperative Extension Staff member Sharon Cowen.

#### **Minutes:**

A motion was made/seconded (Chollet/Alpaugh-Cote) to approve the Minutes of August 13, 2014 with all in favor.

#### **Vision Survey Planning:**

##### Review Revised Survey Draft

Ms. Olenik noted the opportunity to shorten the survey and suggested the group go through the survey question by question (as needed) and refine arduous language. Mr. Throop began to read through the draft survey. As he did so he noted he had received comments for Planning Board Liaison Ivy Vann and the UNH Cooperative Extension's Charlie French and that he would interject them as appropriate.

As the members moved through the document several typographical and punctuation errors were discovered and corrected. Mr. Throop explained how the sets of values would be used to interpret the data and write the results. The members also briefly discussed the questionnaire being completed by those who do not live in town but have a business in town or volunteer in town, adding "living quarters is not necessarily as important as the relationship an individual may have to the town." All the members agreed to simplify the questionnaire as much as possible without destroying important information.

Mr. Zeller noted his concern that people may not respond. “Before we step in too deeply it seems we are worried about the responses” he said. Ms. Olenik replied “we are hoping we will get a great response” with Mr. Zeller noting “I do too.”

The members proceeded to go through the questionnaire one question at a time. At Question #4 (age categories) Ms. Olenik suggested shortening the choices. Mr. Throop noted the available responses were the equivalent of the census breakdown.

At Question #5 Mr. Ward suggested they leave the gender question open. For questions 6 through 8 the members added “check all that may apply.”

At Question #9 (Community Character) Ms. Chollet noted “this is difficult and slows you down” adding “I would be more interested in ranking these, for instance take out the three most important characteristics.” Mr. Throop explained some of the constraints of the survey software program.

The members spent some time on this question comparing the thirteen listed characteristics.

At Question #10 Mr. Throop noted that Mr. French had recommended they combine this question with Question #11 when asking about other characteristics that are important for the future.

Question #12 sparked a discussion about attracting and retaining business in town as well as the educational process to go through when thinking about growing businesses. Ms. Chollet cautioned “we need to remember, this is not about the plan it is about the vision.” Mr. Zeller noted and the members agreed that while there was everything between *strongly agree* and *no opinion* on the questionnaire “there isn’t any *I don’t know*.” The members discussed the significant difference between *no opinion* and *I don’t know*. They also discussed where the notion of *neutral* should fit in, with the members in agreement that visually it should be in the middle (strongly agree/ somewhat agree/neutral/somewhat disagree/strongly disagree).

Question #13 - the members discussed the statement in the last vision statement of attracting local business versus corporate or national chains.

The members agreed to put *neutral* into Questions #14 as well. Reviewing the list of qualities to make the downtown more livable and walkable Ms. Chollet noted “I know this is what the people said but it also has to be realistic.” The members also agreed to changed “public transportation that connects the downtown with recreation *opportunism*” to “recreational *opportunities*.” After further discussion

the members questioned the applicability of *more events/festivals* and removed it. They then discussed *better biking and walking access the downtown*, decided it was redundant and removed it as well.

The members agreed that Question #15 has several assumptions in it that have not been tested. They also agreed the “I believe in attracting and retaining young adults in Peterborough is critical to Peterborough’s economic and social future” should be moved to the economic vitality section.

Ms. Olenik said she felt Question #16 “was way too long.” The members discussed how to shorten the question with Ms. Cadorette suggesting an open-ended question about future housing needs. Ms. Chollet agreed adding “it is too detailed for this chapter” and suggested they take the entire question out. Mr. Throop noted they should have something in the survey that spoke to housing.

Mr. Throop noted Question #17 had “problematic language” by noting “*provide town assistance to help landowners maintain historic structures.*” “I suggest we take it out” he said. Mr. Ward suggested qualifying assistance to note information assistance, not monetary. Mr. Throop agreed that would be a good solution.

In reviewing Question #18 Mr. Ward noted the Water Resources Committee was busy doing all of the listed things and the members agreed to take it out.

The members then discussed Question #19 (agricultural resources) and the definition of agricultural products. Ms. Olenik interjected she thought jams, jellies and locally raised produce, meats and poultry was fine. The members discussed the topic with Mr. Throop reviewing the Planning Board appointment of a developing subcommittee for agri-tourism.

As Question #20 discusses energy initiatives, Mr. Throop reviewed investment in energy conservation and a solar panel farm “that will provide 100 % of the energy needs for the waste water treatment plant with renewable energy.” He noted that project was being coordinated by Rodney Bartlett (DPW) and the location would be adjacent to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The members briefly discussed the establishment of park and ride carpooling lots.

Question #21 was an open-ended questions regarding what types of recreational facilities may be lacking in town and the members agreed to leave it as is. The members discovered a grammatical error in Question #22 and discussed the *big picture vision input* of the town. Mr. Throop noted some of the townspeople might prefer that nothing change, while others believe if there is no change the town will wither away. “This (question) is well done” said Mr. Zeller with Ms. Chollet and

Mr. Ward in agreement. Mr. Throop noted there were other things that make money for the town. “Retail may not be the driver” he said. Ms. Olenik interjected “it is great place to raise a family.”

Mr. Throop noted a re-phrase of Questions #23 as suggested by Mr. French. Moving on to Question #24, the member did not see much of a difference form #23 and decided to remove it.

Ms. Olenik noted her concern form Question #25. “I felt this was long” she said adding “the implication is that the communication from the Board of Selectmen is lousy they are looking for specific ideas of how to do better.” The members briefly discussed repeated efforts and avenue the Board of Selectmen had tried to get information out to the public. They ultimately decided to keep the question but delete some of the options.

Ms. Chollet suggested a re-write of Question #26 suggesting “by asking the survey taker to list the *best way* for him or her to *get* information from the town puts the responsibility on the survey taker.”

With regards to Question #27 (additional comments about town priorities) Ms. Cadorette suggested they take it out. “If people have more to say they will find a space to write” she said.

The members agreed Question #28 needed to have the map added. They went on to review the questions proposed to be omitted as well as *other suggested questions* portions of the survey. Mr. Zeller interjected he would like to see *types of retail and professional services missing or inadequate* stay in the survey. Ms. Cadorette agreed. Ms. Olenik noted identifying the most serious roads or intersections to pedestrian safety was important. “My street is so dangerous” she said adding “I would caution us not to miss something really important.”

Ms. Alpaugh-Cote suggested creating a maker-space question with Mr. Throop noting he would insert one. Mr. Zeller interjected “that is happening so why would it be on the survey? It is a fate accompli.” Mr. Throop replied “no, it is never a fate accompli” with Mr. Ward noting “it *is* moving in the right direction.” He also told the members their first Open House was scheduled for October 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Guernsey Building.

The members then discussed how to get the survey out to the public and get a good response rate. They briefly discussed the use of a QR code to be used with a smart phone to link to the survey online and other options including self-addressed stamped return mailers, postcards with a survey link and information about picking

up a survey at the Town Hose or Library with drop off boxes at the same. There are multiple ways to do it “said Mr. Throop adding “as well as distribution to all the services groups and every town Board and Committee.”

He concluded by noting “but no one can say they did not get one if it gets delivered to their homes.”

After additional discussion the sense of the Committee was to mail a survey to each household in town. Ms. Cadorette asked about an incentive for completing and returning the survey.

Ms. Olenik asked when the survey would go out with Mr. Throop replying he was working on the schedule with the Cooperative Extension but that it would be formatted for the postal service with a return envelope or self-mailer. Mr. Zeller, Ms. Cadorette and Ms. Olenik all offered to assist in the data entry.

Next Meeting:

Ms. Olenik asked “September 24<sup>th</sup>?” adding “or earlier?” Mr. Throop noted the draft should be done “adding “it is the research on the mailing that may take some time.” Ms. Olenik suggested they meet only if they were ready to launch. Mr. Throop noted he would update the members via email on his progress.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Norton  
Administrative Assistant